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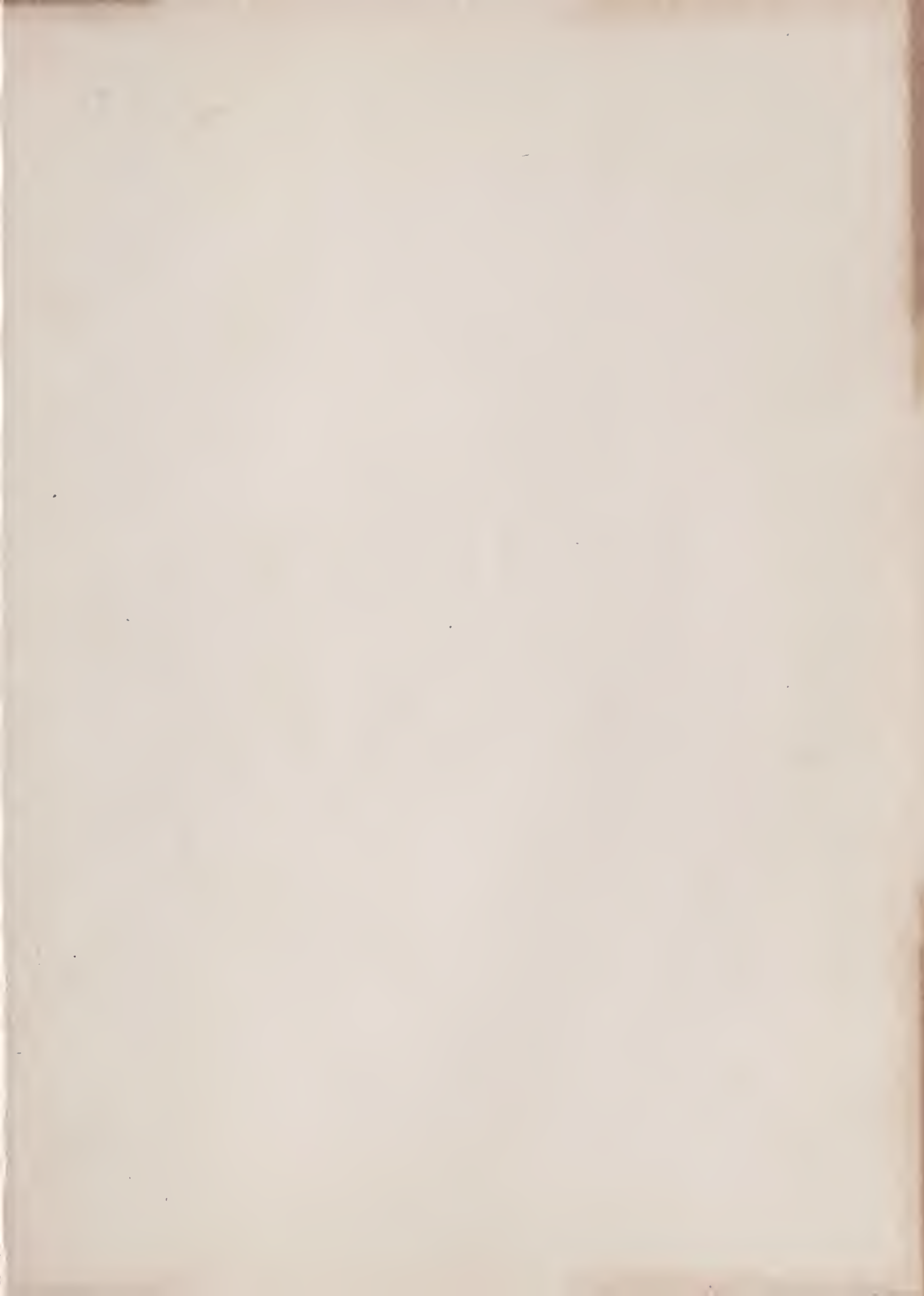
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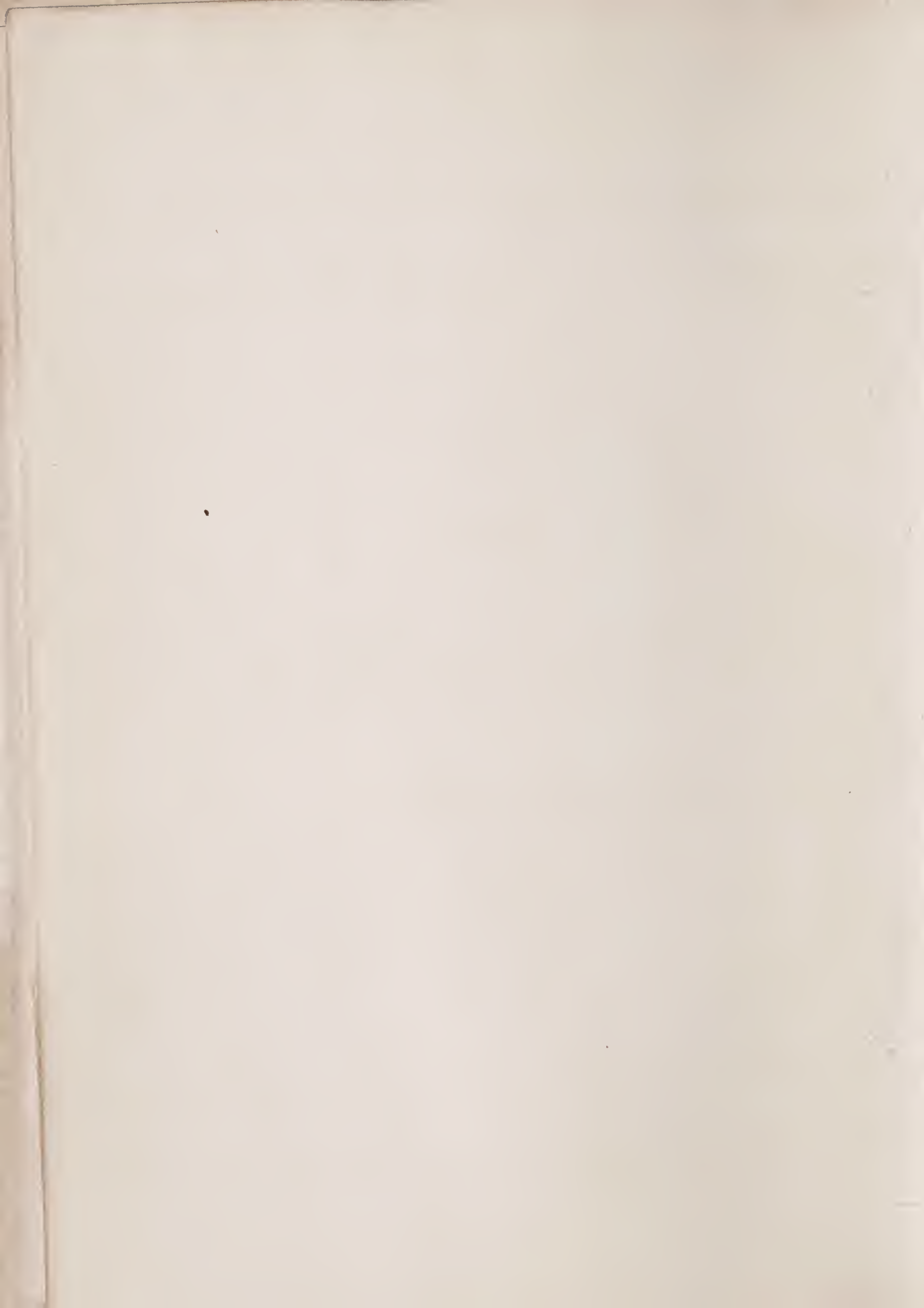
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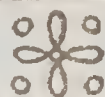
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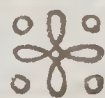


# How She Married Him

AND OTHER STORIES.

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By A. H. LAIDLAW, JR.











# HOW SHE MARRIED HIM,

AND OTHER STORIES.

*per an del* —BY—  
A. H. LAIDLAW, JR.

(Author of "PURGATORY.")

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Gladys Westingfork and Reginald Weltingbroke enjoyed the privilege of being engaged in the usual idiotic fashion and no cloud marred their intense happiness even when Gladys extracted a promise from Reginald to the effect that, no matter what

should happen to necessitate a change in the proceedings, he was to allow the wedding to take place in a church. Reginald thought Gladys's wish a trifle superfluous as he had fully intended being married in a church, nevertheless, he promised his darling that her wish should be granted and again they commenced the somewhat thankless task of being agreeable to each other.

In course of time, the wedding-day was set, the dressmakers had been interviewed and the invitations were sent out. The day gradually drew near, and alas! that ancient enemy of the House of Weltingbroke—Inflammatory Rheumatism—also drew near at the same time and Reginald fell an easy victim to its stealthy grasp.

Three hours before the time appointed for the wedding, Reginald Weltingbroke's physician forbade him to attend it, at which Gladys Westingfork appeared upon the scene, exhibiting rare signs of human distress such as are seldom seen except upon extraordinary occasions—and the stage.

"You will not deny me the pleasure of being married in a church, will you?" she wailed. "Some of the people are going there now and it is too late to stop them. The cake is ordered,—ma has hired the silver, furniture and extra help for the reception at our house, and it is unlucky to postpone a wedding anyway. You promised me that I



could be married in a church and I shall die if I can't be. Even if you can only creep up the aisle, I think it is your duty to be present and I will be extremely grieved if you are not there, for married in a church I must and shall be at twelve o'clock to-day,"—on hearing, which Reginald Weltingbroke was forced to admit that it was too late to postpone the wedding.

Between his groans, he described to Gladys how impossible it would be for him to allow himself to either crawl, creep, or be pushed, carried or shot up the aisle. He even objected to being strapped in a chair and being tagged and expressed to the church as if he were a wedding-present.

Gladys, however, still insisted on being married in a church at twelve o'clock. What was to be done? The best man arrived and suggested that he might be proxy and that Miss Westingfork could marry him in Reginald's name. Gladys consented to that proposition but Reginald objected and it was not accepted.

Suddenly Gladys gave vent to a plan which was immediately adopted. There was no time to lose. The best man was despatched to a friend's house near by,—he soon returned, bearing a full-fledged phonograph which he placed beside Reginald, whereupon Gladys handed her *fiancé* a prayer-book opened at the marriage-service and, between ex-

clamations concerning pain and weakness, Reginald proceeded to groan his quota of responses into the machine.

After a few final endearments and instructions, Gladys departed to prepare for the ceremony, leaving Reginald and his best man to fill the phonograph with the marriage-service at their leisure.

During a lull in the proceedings, Reginald murmured,—“If I wasn’t in love with Gladys, Jack, I’d pitch the pesky machine at her head.” In truth, Reginald Weltingbroke was annoyed.

When the troth of the groom had been sufficiently plighted to the phonograph, it was packed up and, accompanied by the best man and Reginald’s best wishes for a pleasant journey, the metallic groom set forth to meet its bride.

\* \* \* \* \*

The church was crowded with people of all sorts;—friends, acquaintances, enemies, reporters, nobodies, somebodies, reprobates and hirelings. The joyous strains of the “wedding march” burst forth from the organ as the bridesmaids, followed by the bride and her father, approached the altar, while, at the same time, the best man and the minister strolled from the vestry into the chancel. The best man held a phonograph under his right arm, while, with his left, he awkwardly assisted the minister, who was endeavoring to bring a small table upon

the scene. They placed the table beside the bride and set the phonograph upon it.

After a chilly silence had pervaded the edifice for a time, the minister said,—“If any man can show just cause why this person and this—this—machine may not lawfully be joined togeth—” then he stopped for the bride was pinching him. She explained in an undertone,—“My would-be husband is very sick and this phonograph has his voice in it. I am not marrying the phonograph.”

“I gathered as much—” whispered the minister, and turning to the people, many of whom were murmuring and demurring with the possible thought that Reginald Weltingbroke might be an impediment to the marriage about to be consummated, he said,—“Beloved brethren, this lady is *not* marrying the phonograph. The groom is unavoidably detained, but his voice is encased in the instrument before you. If any man can show just cause why this lady and the voice of the groom may not lawfully be joined together, kindly let me know immediately.”

No one objected and the marriage was continued.

After a time the minister leaned forward and spoke to the bride. “What is it’s name?” he asked. “*His* name is Reginald Weltingbroke,” answered the bride haughtily. “Voice of Reginald Weltingbroke”—inquisitively inquired the minis-



ter—"Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?" Here the best man took his cue and, stepping to the table, turned a crank, whereupon the phonograph, which up to this time had maintained a discreet silence, ejaculated in shrill tones,—“I will—I, Reginald—”

“Hush! It is going on with the next response”—said the minister, who then turned and inquired of the bride,—“Wilt thou have the man represented by this machine to thy wedded husband?” “I shall!” replied the bride in a determined manner, shortly after which her father gave her away to Mr. Phonograph, who, in uncertain tones, elaborated by hitches and jerks, then blurted out the following:—

“Weltingbroke, take thee—O, my head!—Gladys Westingfork, to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this—weak? I should say I was!—day forward, for better or worse—it’s getting worse!—for richer, for poorer—what are you laughing at, you blankity-blank idiot?—in sickness—exactly—and in health, to—” from which point the voice became unintelligible, excepting here and there where an infantile “cuss-word” rang out clear and strong, searching the auriculars of the entire congregation.

The bride appeared slightly embarrassed and the minister invited the best man to cease turning the crank. He did so, shortly after which the cere-

mony was discontinued temporarily and the bridal party sat down, while the best man took the phonograph back to Reginald in order that the shattered response might be repaired. On his return, the wedding was taken up where it had been left off and the phonograph screeched the before-mutilated response in a truly artistic manner. Then the bride had another little say, after which the best man laid a ring upon the phonograph and the bride laid her hand upon the ring while the machine muttered,—“With this ring I thee wed and with all thy worldly goods I thee endow—If I wasn’t in love with Gladys, Jack, I’d pitch the pesky machine at her head.”

All—including the bride’s father, the best man, the minister, even the bride herself—looked positively annoyed at this voluntary confession of love for the bride on the groom’s part. However, they gradually recovered from their temporary embarrassment and the minister soon afterwards ventured to say,—“I pronounce this woman and the voice of the man represented by this phonograph, man and wife.”

So they were married. She that had been Gladys Westingfork repaired at once to the house of her chosen one, flew to his room, entered and knelt by his side. “Reginald,”—she cooed,—“I am married.” “Are you?”—replied Reginald,—“Am I

married too?" "Your voice is,"—answered the bride,—“I am married to your voice, but, as your voice cannot be separated from you very well, except through the medium of a phonograph, from this day I shall consider myself married to you—voice and all. I am so happy, Reginald! I had a presentiment that something would happen to prevent my being married in a church, but nothing did prevent it, dear, and I could just kiss you.” She did so.

“My darling!” murmured Reginald and, raising his arms with difficulty, he embraced his wife.





## REJECTED.

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**S**HE was so lonely—her baby was dead—and she was so poor,—very poor. She was too weak to work and too unhappy to put her heart into anything. She would sit at her window for hours and look out at the children playing in the street. She remembered that her darling had loved them and, in a way, they seemed to bring her little one back to her—her little one that had gone far, far away to an Invisible Land.

All the mother's savings had gone to buy a plot in which to bury her baby. She needed money badly. She read an old paper to see if any one wanted to employ a woman who was too broken-hearted to work. No,—nobody wanted her. Her eyes wandered to a story in the paper and she tried to read it, but could not.

A thought suddenly flashed through the mother's

dulled mind and brought her back to something more than mere existence. Why could *she* not write a story—a story about her baby? Some one would be sure to buy it and the money she would receive for it would enable her to live a while longer, and she would feel as though the money had come from the little angel that was in Heaven—the angel that used to be her little one. Yes, she *would* write the story. She would try to see her darling through the eyes of others. She would write as though she were the cripple across the street who had loved him. Her story would certainly be accepted. No one could refuse it—the story of her baby.

She would sit by the window and write where she could hear the children playing merrily in the street. The bit of a pencil held tight in the wasted hand wandered back and forth over the crumpled sheet of paper. She felt that she was telling the story too feelingly and destroyed what she had written. Then she began again, trying hard—O, *so* hard—to write as though the words came from the heart of the cripple across the street—not from her own heart.

She wrote on and on till the crumpled sheet was covered with words—till it was wet with tears. She could not help crying ; it all seemed so strange—a story about her baby. Would the cripple across the street have written a story like it ?

The shadows began to creep in through the window. They told the mother that the night was not far away and, with feverish cheeks and throbbing temples pressed fast against the window-pane, she read what she had written o'er and o'er, till it became too dark to see—till her eyes were blinded with tears.

She would take the story to the office of the paper herself; she could not afford to send it by the post.

She would go early the next morning. How excited she became! Her eyes burned with expectation and she could not sleep.

Morning came at last after a long, weary night. How the mother trembled when she reached the office, but the gentleman she saw there was kind—*so* kind. He took her name and address and promised to read her story. She kissed his hand and went away—went back to her desolate home.

A week passed. Why did she not hear from the gentleman? Her small stock of provisions was nearly exhausted, and she was too proud to beg. The gentleman would probably publish the story first and pay her for it afterward. She would wait a while longer.

One evening the postman stopped at the desolate home for the first time in many years. He had a letter for the mother and her hands trembled so that she could hardly open it. There was no money in

the envelope—only her story. The gentleman had probably sent it back to her now that it had been printed. She slowly unfolded the paper and a note dropped into her lap. She read the note and the truth gradually dawned upon her. The gentleman wrote that the office was overstocked with material of that kind. Then other people had written stories about babies, had they? Their stories had been accepted, too. She was glad that the stories sent by the other people had not been returned to them in order to break their hearts.

It grew dark. The mother began to feel cold. She had no coal. She had no wood. There was some oil left in the lamp, however. By and by she found a match and, lighting the lamp, she placed it near the window and knelt on the floor beside it. She did not know that the window was open. She did not know that it was beginning to rain. She only knew that her story—the story of her baby—had been rejected. The night wind blew in through the open window and cooled the mother's burning cheeks. The window curtains flapped about her as though shaken by invisible hands. After a time, a gust of wind blew the curtains over the lamp. The flame darted at the curtains and leaped with joy as it multiplied faster and faster. Now the mother felt warm! An angel must have brought her a fire, and she smiled her thanks to some people



who were looking at her from the street.

The curtains flapped about her in sheets of flame. What could the people in the street be looking at? She felt warm and she was happy—so happy—for did she not see her baby beckoning to her? She would go to him and tell him how the story had been rejected; he would understand. She would not go out by the front door for there were people there and they seemed to be trying to get into the house. Why did they wish to disturb her? She would go out by the back way. Her baby was still beckoning to her—she would have to make haste.

The mother hastened out into the garden. Her little one had loved flowers and she stopped a moment to gather some for him. Still the baby beckoned and she followed and followed until she reached him; then, casting the flowers at his feet, she sank to the ground.

In the morning they found her—a charred mass—upon her baby's grave. The story of her little one was soon published by the paper which had rejected it. The loss of her life had made it available.



## A Tale of Alternate Transmigration.

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ONCE upon a time—in fact, it was so long ago that I forget the exact year in which the event occurred—there existed a domestic king and queen who had reared their son and only child in luxury and idleness. He was a badly spoiled—or, rather, he was a *perfectly* spoiled young prince and was as cross and as disobliging as one could possibly wish. At the same time, there existed a foreign king and queen five miles away, who were endeavoring to rear a daughter by the same process as that utilized by the domestic king and queen, and the former met with the same irritating success as did their royal neighbors.

It was an established fact that the domestic prince and the foreign princess were to be made man and wife directly they arrived at years of discretion, and, in preparation for the event, the astrologers of

both courts had wisely declared unto their respective lieges, that the domestic prince and the foreign princess would achieve that state at precisely the same minute, hour, day, month and year,—which declaration caused great rejoicing at both courts. There was one trouble. As long as the domestic prince and the foreign princess continued fair in face and ugly in temper, there would be no arriving at years of discretion for either of them, and how to remedy this little difficulty was made the principal riddle of the hour.

The queens of both courts were frequently paralyzed with grief for days and days on account of the willfulness of their offspring, while the kings of both courts were frequently paralyzed with stimulants for the same length of time and—it is to be hoped—for the same reason; and, during such lapses from holding the reins of their respective governments, both kings were usually to be found lying somewhere in one kingdom, while the two queens were crying somewhere in the other. In the meantime, the domestic prince and the foreign princess, being thrown entirely upon their own resources, would engage themselves in bickering and quarreling with each other and, when tired of such child's play, they invariably occupied their royal leisure in endeavoring to maim or disfigure one another, which generally had the result of throwing both kings

and queens into a relapse,—thereby allowing the domestic prince and the foreign princess to continue their little game unmolested. It was not well for them to carry on thus, especially as they would eventually inherit both thrones, and, as they had no other playmates,—(little dukes and duchesses apparent were not considered fitting companions for them)—a fondness in each for the other was all the more to be desired. The populace, in the interim, prayed incessantly that the then-existing reigners might continue to reign indefinitely.

Strangely enough, the birthday of the domestic prince and the birthday of the foreign princess had occurred upon the same date, and, whenever that mutual feast-day came around, they were accustomed and forced to exchange tokens of esteem. On their nineteenth mutual birthday, the domestic prince sent the foreign princess a dumb and portable piano, with a message to the effect that if she played on it and gave up her other piano, the populace would soon grow to love her for herself alone and not because it was their duty. “The hateful thing!” she exclaimed. It was well she said it, as it balanced a somewhat stronger remark uttered at the same instant by the domestic prince on beholding her gift to him,—a golden rattle, on the handle of which was inscribed in diamonds: “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.”



The domestic prince thereupon reported to his parents an accurate description of the royal gift just tendered him,—he was a truthful little chap—while, at the same time, the foreign princess was going through a similar performance—she was not to be outdone by the prince in point of truthfulness. Immediately an intermittent correspondence sprang up between king and queen of each court. They wrote to one another semi-daily and visited each other hemi-demi-semi-occasionally for the purpose of inventing some plan by means of which their darlings might be forced to love one another. Many methods were tested and much advice was listened to upon the subject, but all experiments resulted in dismally complete failures. The prince and princess were forced to associate for weeks; then they were allowed to remain away from one another for days; then they were obliged to visit each other every other day; then once a week; then every day but Sunday—and, finally, on Sundays only. They were asked, implored and forbidden to maim each other, but to no purpose. They continued to maim, chastise and otherwise discommode one another, until both kingdoms were in an uproar, and the engagement was about to be declared off, when a message was simultaneously delivered at both courts with great pomp and despatch.

The message read to the effect that one How-de-do,—fashionable magician from the town of Afar—would condescend to take the wayward cherubs in hand, and, if allowed one year, he would guarantee to counteract their mutual animosity to such a pitch that they would not only be willing, but *wild* to marry each other. This matter furnished the four parents with food for thought for an indefinite length of time, but the food finally gave out and they then decided that it would be as well to give the magician and their children a trial. They gave the magician a private audience, listened to his plans, and commanded him to commence his performance without delay.

The magician then drew a market-basket forth from his pocket-handkerchief, broke it up into four small baskets, and handed one to each parent. "They contain directions for preparing your offspring for the inevitable ordeal,"—he said, directly after which he turned himself into a banjo and vanished. The parents studied the directions found in the baskets until they had committed them to memory, whereupon the baskets and directions became pelicans and flew away.

On the morning of their twentieth birthday, the prince and princess were carefully dressed in their Sunday clothes, and the prince drove over to congratulate the princess,—it was his week to drive

over. They were thereupon sent out to walk upon the paths surrounding the palace, and were incidentally requested not to tread upon the emerald sward. Having been cautioned against treading upon the emerald sward, the truthful pair became filled with a desire to discover why they should not, and, accordingly, when they had walked about a block and a half down the path and considered themselves out of sight and mind, with one accord, the domestic prince and the foreign princess stepped upon it. No sooner had they done so, then the emerald sward opened and they casually dropped a mile or so into the "vowels" of the earth, as a bright child, who was extant at that time, was heard to observe in giving his version of the affair. A proclamation was then issued and distributed gratuitously throughout both kingdoms. It contained the exclusive information that the domestic prince and the foreign princess had gone to make a protracted visit on somebody's distant aunt.

The populace of both kingdoms wept—for joy.



## II.

ARRIVING at the end of their descent, the prince and the princess rose from their several knees upon which they found themselves, and looked about them. They saw that they were in a spacious cavern.—I will not describe it. It was just like all other spacious caverns—large and very roomy. At one end of the cavern sat the magician, toying nonchalantly with a three-headed ebony cat. Slowly raising his eye-brows, the magician turned his electric eyes full upon the pair who had involuntarily fallen into his presence. “Separate!”—he cried; for the prince and princess were unwittingly standing side by side, surveying the unbroken beauty of the scene with mingled fright and curiosity. “Separate!”—he cried; and, without having moved, the prince and princess suddenly found themselves some distance apart. How they became so, they did not know at the time nor have they learned since, but it does not matter. Suffice it to say that it was so.



“Neither of you will be able to utter a sound, nor can you move while I am speaking to you, so you need not try,”—crooned the magician in a cheery manner. The prince and princess endeavored to speak and move, however, and discovered that the magician, like themselves, was given to reciting nothing inaccurately. The magician then brightened up the countenances of the pair before him by a glance from his eyes, and continued as follows: “You are to be cured of a mutual animosity. I have puzzled over the matter for a long time and have finally constructed a solution to it. I find that I cannot change your minds directly, but I can alter your bodies; your minds will then conform to to your metamorphosed bodies, which will amount to the same thing in the end. My plan is to make you devoted to each other. As human beings you are not so. There is nothing left but for me to alter you in such a manner that you cannot help but be devoted to one another. I have studied priceless books upon the subject and have arrived at the following conclusion;—one of you must become a horse or a dog.”

A high bred look of disgust and disdain crept over the plastic faces of the listeners, but the magician went on just as though nothing of the sort had occurred.

“The horse and the dog are mankind’s most

faithful attendants, next to women; but, as it would be extremely inconvenient for either of you to take sufficient care of a horse, I think it best to banish such an idea,"—and, raising his scalp, which opened like the cover of a box, the magician thrust his disengaged hand into the top of his skull, and, having displaced part of his brain, he succeeded in securing the idea about the horse and removed it; then, re-arranging his brain to suit his intended programme for the day, he allowed his scalp to snap back into place. Taking the idea about the horse, he placed it upon a tiny elevator, whereupon it was hoisted up to the outer air and speedily forgotten.

Turning to his select and horrified audience, the magician drew two tiny whips from one of his sleeves. Advancing toward the prince and princess, he handed each a whip, and said:—"I have attained the following result,—one of you must become a dog!" Stepping up to the prince, the magician struck him a happy blow upon the head and cried,—“It is now one o'clock. Become a dog!" The prince became a dog—a Newfoundland one—and the princess became released from her perilous silence. “Beat him!" said the magician cordially to the princess. The princess obligingly beat the dog, who cowered and licked her hand. “To-morrow, at one o'clock, the prince

will become himself again, and you will become a dog," said the magician encouragingly to the princess, who bit her lip and smiled sweetly in anticipation of the event. "I'll bite him!" thought she.

Then the magician proceeded to foretell a little of the charmed life which they were about to lead.

"Every day at one o'clock," he said, "whichever one of you is a dog, shall become his or her former human self, and whichever one of you is enjoying human form, shall become a dog. The one in human form will always have one of the whips which I have given you; the one in canine form will have his or her whip secured about his or her neck, in the form of an irremovable collar interlarded with spikes. The one who is in human form will always be at liberty to beat the one who is a dog unmercifully, but bear in mind that the dog can remember such an incident, and when he or she becomes a human being, he or she can wreak as much vengeance upon the beater as he or she pleases." So saying, the magician became a tree, the spacious cavern became a fenced-in garden around the tree, and the princess and be-collared Newfoundland dog became the only living occupants of the fenced-in garden.

The princess could not climb the fence, although she tried to do so; neither could the dog. There

was no help for it,—they were fenced into the quiet, rural spot, and there they would have to remain. It never grew dark, nor did the princess ever grow sleepy. “We are going to be starved,” thought the princess, but as neither she nor the dog ever became hungry, they were not starved.

At one o’clock the next day, without a word of warning, the princess became a dog—a bulldog—and the Newfoundland dog became a prince; and the prince and the bull-dog, like the princess and the Newfoundland dog, grew neither sleepy nor hungry, nor did the daylight fade. They would not have known one day from another had not a perpetual calendar, with clock attachment, appeared upon the trunk of the tree shortly after the commencement of their mutual animosity cure.

When the prince tried to climb the fence, the bull-dog drew him back and partook freely of a merciless beating in consequence; but the day after the princess retaliated by beating and cuffing the Newfoundland dog until he howled with pain.

The weeks passed by and the human being and the dog soon saw that night, hunger and sleep were all to be denied them. They were to live in one continuous day until the magician should see fit to change his tactics. No opportunity for communicating with each other was afforded them, as their transformations were consum-



mated at the same instant, and neither of the dogs was gifted with the power of speech.

Each dog soon grew ardently attached to his mistress, or her master (whichever it was) as all dogs will; and it was not long before either dog would have gone through fire and water for his mistress, or her master; but, as there was neither fire nor water upon the premises, such a feat was absolutely impossible; and, as each dog regained his or her human form, all such feelings would generally vanish, though they would not vanish as completely as they had done during the first month of the test. So the months went by, one after another, and, at the end of six of them, the tree turned into the magician, the ground inside of the fence disappeared, and the magician, the prince and the bulldog dropped into the spacious cavern before described.



## III.

**A**S the prince and bull-dog struck the tiled floor of the cavern, the bull-dog became the princess, and the prince remained himself. The prince had grown a beard and moustache on his off-days from being a dog, and had acquired that perfection of manly beauty so common in princes years ago.

The magician eyed the prince and princess electrically, and with a marked falter in his speech, said: "Do you love each other?" "As dogs, yes!" vouchsafed the truthful pair. "Then your trial is not yet complete!" answered the magician, drily, upon hearing which the prince and princess became filled with vague presentiments, and, with one accord, they sprang upon the magician and began to tear out handful after handful of his luxuriant beard, notwithstanding which the magician remained inexorable, and the self-imposed task of the prince and princess became thankless, for the luxuriant beard, upon which they were so

diligently working, only grew in again as quickly as it was withdrawn. The truthful pair therefore decided that it behooved them to adopt another plan of action, but before they could originate one, the magician cried: "Away!" and they immediately found themselves away at a distance from him of seven feet.

"You are not toned down yet," moaned the magician wearily and, deftly knocking the prince down with a club, he exclaimed: "Become a dog!" and the prince at once resumed his canine semblance, the magician became the tree, clock and calendar combined, the spacious cavern became the fenced-in garden, and the princess and Newfoundland dog became prisoners therein, as formerly.

The weeks moved on more slowly than ever. Perpetual daylight, lack of society and sleepless existence were becoming monotonous and unbearable. The prince longed for some one to whom he might talk and, when it became the bull-dog's turn to be a princess, she, too, mourned the lack of society that was afforded her. She had even grown to love the Newfoundland dog and had ceased to beat him. She wondered whether she could not love him if he became a man, and concluded that such a calamity was not impossible. The prince fostered similar thoughts concerning the princess

and eventually came to the conclusion that, rather than live with the bull-dog all his life, he would certainly prefer to marry the princess, and, utterly broken in spirit, he one day cried aloud, "I wish I could tell her that I will make an attempt to love her." The bull-dog licked his hand.

Five minutes later there was a crash. The tree, clock and calendar combined, disappeared and, in their stead, appeared a huge writing desk, fully equipped with stationery in its widest sense. On top of the desk, fixed and immovable, were a small clock and a tiny calendar.

Then began a ceaseless correspondence. One day the prince would write an account of his trials, troubles and tribulations at great length; the next day the princess would read them, after which she would write answers to his various questions, ask some on her own account, to be answered by him upon the morrow, and relate an adequate description of her own woes and griefs. Each felt that wedded life could not be more terrible than their forced imprisonment, during the continuation of which they could not possibly have more than a one-sided squabble. They tried to summon the magician by pounding upon the writing desk and calling him, but evidently that was not the way to get him, for he did not appear. The prince and princess continued to correspond regularly every



other day, and both gradually grew more and more desirous of seeing each other in simultaneous human form again.

Six months from the time of their last descent into the spacious cavern brought them to the eve of their joint twenty-first birthday, and again, without warning, they dropped into the presence of their enchanter; and, as before, the one who was a dog at the time became a human being, while the one who was in human form remained so.

“Do you love one another?” asked the magician in doubtful anticipation. “We do!” exclaimed the prince and princess, in the same breath horror-stricken for fear that he might not believe them. “In that case,” said the magician, turning his electric orbs upon them, “my plan has worked to a charm, and at twelve o’clock to-night, at the moment you become twenty-one years old apiece, you will both arrive at years of discretion. From that instant my power over you will cease, excepting through the medium of your whips. You will each retain your whip and mark the words which I am about to utter: If either of you should become angry with the other, you have only to strike him or her with your whip and, for twenty-four hours, he or she will become a dog, as formerly; but in order to curtail any undue demonstratious of such a nature, bear in mind that the one who causes the

other to become a dog for a day, will himself or herself become a dog for the day following the return to human form of the one who was first caused to be a dog. On that account, I do not think you will strike one another, as neither of you will care to become a dog yourself after the punishment you have meted out to the other has been consummated. Another thing! Should either of you seek to destroy, hide, or otherwise make way with the whip of the other, that person will become a dog for the remainder of his or her natural life. After these painful revelations, are you still anxious to marry?" "We are!" exclaimed the prince and princess, of their own free wills. "Very well," answered the magician. "I have telephoned the particulars of this accident to your parents, and you will be wedded at noon to-morrow." "I have nothing to wear," gasped the princess, effeminately. "They are at work on your trousseau now," retorted the magician. "The guests have been summoned, the presents have been received and receipted for, the cake has been baked, and you are both supposed to have come to your senses at your aunt's in the country. *Au revoir!*"

The clock struck twelve. The magician and spacious cavern faded away, and the prince and princess found themselves waking in their respective kingdoms on the morning of their joint

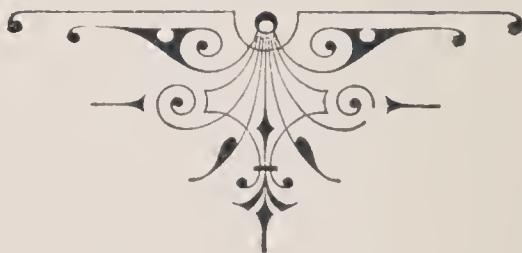
twenty-first birthday. "It must have been a dream!" was the simultaneous mental ejaculation of the prince and princess, in reference to their escapade just ended; but a tiny whip, bound tightly around the arm of each, disproved that idea beyond a doubt.

There was great rejoicing at both courts over the success of the experiment, and the populace enthused over the change of affairs at a great rate. As the magician had prophesied, the prince and princess were married at noon—thus giving each other themselves as a birthday gift, for they had no time to purchase anything which might have proved more acceptable. "We have lost a year and gained a lifetime," was their mutual exclamation; so they evidently did not object so much to the marriage as one would have supposed.

As for the magician, he came along later in the day. The king and queen of each court gave him a private audience in the kitchen of the palace of the parents of the bride, not daring to allow him upstairs for fear it might slip out as to who he was and what his efforts had resulted in. The four parents filled his inexhaustible hat with gold and gave him a pair of champing steeds, which champed so noisily that the parents requested the magician to favor them with his absence before the guests should inquire into the cause of the disturbance.

Accordingly, the magician boarded the chariot attached to the champing steeds, and they ran away with him to a distant land, where he found that his fame had preceded him. He went into the trick business and soon became the very Adelina Patti of magicians, asking \$10,000 for every exhibition. As he never received that amount, he never gave an exhibition, for his vanity prevented him from accepting a cent less,—still he appeared satisfied and lived for several centuries with ease and equanimity,—and, whenever a desire to maim one another came over the prince and princess, each thought of the whip which the other had in readiness to punish any such outburst, and they were thus enabled to lead a pair of blameless lives, and to live and die in the usual fairy-story fashion.

See what a glorious thing it is for one to have the power not only to curb one's own temper, but also to possess the means by which one may curb the temper of another!





## The Autobiography of a Coffin.

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AT the tender age of not more than ten minutes, I was borne into a large room and placed carefully upon a table. It was not long before I recognized the fact that I was not alone,—there were a great many others in the room, my exact counterparts in shape, although different in style, color and general make-up. I possessed a fiery-red exterior, a grass-green interior, silver handles and silver plates, on account of which I considered myself to be quite a gay and festive affair. I remember all this distinctly, for, a few minutes later, I learned from my associates that I was known as a coffin and that I was going to be buried, so I summed up my general excellence at once and wondered why such an ornament as myself had been created only to be speedily obliterated and hid from the admiring gaze of hundreds who I felt would or should view me with envious eyes.

But alas! (or rather, hurrah!) I had one fault. I never could make out exactly what it was, but it kept me from being buried, so I considered it a nice thing to have around. Every family to whom I was sent promptly returned me with the information that my looks were against me,—that I contained a flaw. Many improvements were made in my appearance, but in vain,—people simply would *not* utilize me, until one day (never shall I forget it!) a young man entered the undertaker shop where I was living, and nervously asked to see the latest thing in coffins.

“What is the length of the corpse?” inquired the undertaker. “Five feet,” was the ready reply, “but he isn’t a corpse yet, he’s only *going* to be one.” “How is that?” asked the undertaker, much interested, and the young man, as though waiting for a question of that sort, seated himself comfortably upon a bier, and told his story as follows:—

“The man is a friend of mine and he wants to know how much money will be left after his funeral expenses are paid, so he started me out on a shopping expedition, and I have been pricing ready-made mourning dresses, crape, coffins, monuments and cemetery lots all day. I have succeeded in purchasing a job lot of crape for the wife, and have secured the lease of two choice graves for ninety-

nine years,—one for the future corpse, the other for the wife, who is in excellent health at present, but the future corpse thought that I might be able to purchase two graves at wholesale rates, and I have succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. I discovered a plot containing ten graves, nine of them being occupied. It had been bought by a family who had arranged that the plot should be large enough to hold them all—when dead. Little by little, the family has stopped living until now there is but one left, and that one is at present taking the place of the Chinese Giant in a dime museum. He is so tall that there is no room for him in the plot, much less in the grave allotted to him, in consequence of which he has permitted me, for a trifling amount, to lease the extra grave for the future corpse.

The wife's grave is quite a distance from that of her husband and will necessitate the placing of a figure upon the husband's monument in such a way that, by means of a mechanical contrivance, it will indicate the whereabouts of the wife's grave at intervals of thirty seconds. The wife's grave was dug for the pet dog of a wealthy widow, but before the burial could take place a suitor appeared, whereupon the pet dog was unostentatiously despatched to a neighboring glue-factory, and the grave has been lying idle ever since. It is not quite lengthy enough for the wife, but, by placing her in it slanto-

diagonally, she can rest securely, and I do not think she will wobble. The coffin is bothering me now. Could I purchase two second-hand coffins proportionately cheaper than if I were purchasing only one? "

The undertaker replied that he *might* allow a little something by way of a discount in return for the young man's kindness in relating the details of the case, at which the young man began to examine some of my associates, meanwhile chatting with the undertaker in an affable and inquisitive manner. During a pause in the search for his friend's summer outfit, the young man said, "Why do they call you an undertaker? Do you undertake anything besides corpses?" "We undertake to do pinking," replied the undertaker cheerfully, as he pointed to a sign in the window which read to that effect.

The young man eventually selected me for the wife's final habitation, and one of my worn-out relatives for the ensconcement of the husband. My worn-out relative was chosen because the husband expected to die at once, while I was selected on account of my appearance, as there was no way of finding out at what time the wife would be obliged to occupy me and, then again, the young man thought that green and red would be cheerful colors for her to look at, in case she should spend



much time in dying.

The young man ordered the name and date of birth of the husband to be engraved upon the plate of my worn-out relative, while the wife's name and date of birth were to be engraved upon my plate,—and a space was to be left upon each plate for the date of death. The next day would be the husband's birthday and he was very anxious to die on that day in order to make a single date suffice for both his birth and death.

Having requested that my relative and myself be sent C. O. D., and having thanked the undertaker for his kindness, the young man departed; directly after which, my relative and I were hastily huddled together into a black vehicle, and severely jolted and jostled over a very uneven road; then we were removed from the black vehicle, and, having been carried through a pretty garden to the basement of a large house, we were received and paid for,—after which we were taken upstairs to be inspected by the future corpse and his wife.

We were ushered into a spacious room, where lay an old man—evidently the dying one. At the sight of my relative, his eyes gleamed with satisfaction; but, on seeing me, the gleam changed to one of anger.

“Do you take me for a millionaire?” he cried, to a person standing beside him, and whom I at

once recognized as the young man who had bought me. The young man assured him that I was a great bargain, and that he had procured me at job lot prices, at which the old man seemed satisfied, and, turning to his wife who appeared to be a happy little body, he indicated me and said, "That is your coffin, madam. Take it ! I give it to you without reserve. I bid you use it and no other when you die. About that monument, Charles, I suppose you know that the one over my grave will do for my wife, and you can have her name put on it now in order to save the trouble and extra expense of having it done later." "Henry !" exclaimed the wife indignantly, "I will *not* have my present name put upon that monument, for the simple reason that—that it may not be my name when I die; and, if I *should* change my present name, I would have to have it put upon some one else's monument. You do not know how attractive a widow is to many in —." But the future corpse had fainted.

When he came to, there was a scene. I have not the gift of describing scenes, but, if I had, I never could describe that one. The husband, feeling that the crape, grave, ready-made mourning dress and coffin which he had so generously donated to his spouse were to be used as bait for an unwary mortal, hurled choice imprecations at the offender by the mouthful. To think that she should dream of

another husband after he had just supplied her with conveniences for her death. It was maddening—it was an outrage, and it seemed for a time as if the old man would actually get well, so great was his desire to restrain any one but his wife from possessing the coffin, the grave, the ready-made mourning dress, and the other little funereal accessories which he had provided in such a munificent manner. Then the physician arrived and the old man's thoughts were turned into a new channel.

“Doctor!” he murmured convulsively, “I wish you to do me a favor. The undertakers charge so much for a hearse, that I have made arrangements to have an express wagon stop for me when I am dead, and remove me to the cemetery. The express man has orders to call to-morrow (my birthday) at ten o'clock, and, if I am not ready, he is to call every morning at the same time until I am in a condition to undergo the trip. The expressmen charge by the pound, you know, and, as my head, neck and hands are all that will show when I am in the coffin, will you take the rest of me in payment for your bill, and sell it to some medical college? By doing so, you will not only take a load from my mind, but you will also take a weight from the express wagon, and I will go much cheaper.” The physician inconsiderately refused to comply with the old man's wishes and, fretting about the ingratitude

of human beings in general, and of physicians in particular, the old man died soon afterward of a broken heart, thereby forcing his wife to pay a little extra in order to have another date engraved upon my relative's plate, for the old man died a few hours before his birthday.

According to contract, the express man called at ten the next morning, and the old man was ready. My relative bade me a fond adieu, and, fully occupied by the old man, it was carried out of the house and placed among the trunks, boxes and barrels which nearly filled the wagon. I was standing near a window where I could see the entire proceeding. When all was ready, the widow gracefully ascended to the seat beside the driver, and my relative was driven away to be buried in the freak's out-grown-and-cast-off grave. The next day I heard the servants tell how the expressman had attended to his numerous duties and deliveries on his way to the cemetery so that, by the time my relative was buried, having almost exhausted the hour-and-a-half bargained for by the late old man and himself, he had driven the widow home at a furious gallop. It must have been so, for she seemed worried on her return, and her expression was not at all a pleasant one until she had finished counting her post-mortem dowry.

Then she sent for an upholsterer and had my lid



fastened to me by means of hinges, and a padlock was added to my stock of jewelry. For some time I was used as a money-chest and work-basket combined,—then the money was transferred to a large tin box, whereupon some hooks were hammered into my back and, having been stood on end, I was used as a wardrobe until the moths got into me; after which I was thoroughly cleaned and used as a silver chest.

About that time I began to show signs of age,—the wear and tear of my checkered existence had left many traces upon me, and the widow called in a friend to consult with her about my future.

“It has gotten into such a state that I would never want to be buried in it,” remarked the widow to her friend; “why I wouldn’t even want to be found dead in it,—and a new one, when necessary, will cost less in the end than to have this one renovated every two or three years until it is wanted.” So she went on, and it was finally decided that the widow and I were to part. I was delighted at the prospect, for I never had liked the idea of going to that small dog’s grave, where I would be fitted so securely that I could not turn over, in case an occasion should arise where it might become necessary for me to indulge in such an acrobatic performance.

The widow tried to sell me to my original owner, the undertaker, but he refused to take back goods

that had been either worn or damaged; so, having removed my lid, silver plates and handles for future use upon my successor, the widow had me placed in the garden where I was filled with earth and forget-me-nots.

I remained disguised as a portable flower-bed for several years, when the widow's former prediction came true,—she changed her name.

The house was closed up. I was alone.

Some time afterwards, another family moved into the house. It was in the winter time, when my contents consisted of nothing but earth, roots, and dead leaves. The family comprised a father, a mother and seven children. The latter explored everything upon the premises at their earliest opportunity, and were not long in discovering that I was no ordinary flower-bed. The parents were summoned from the house. I was inspected and a consultation was held, which resulted in my contents being shoveled and dumped out; after which I was thoroughly cleansed, my cracks were stopped up with putty, and then, O, then—the disgrace of it makes me shudder!—I was once more installed in the house, but not as a money chest, not as a work basket, not as a wardrobe, nor even as a coal scuttle, but in the capacity of—a bath-tub.

However, my disgrace did not last long. My exposure to the elements had taken away my strength

and I felt that I could not keep up much longer,—nor did I. Soon it became necessary for me to be nailed together every time a child took a bath, and finally, when a member of the family desired to bathe, it became necessary for the entire remaining members to sit around me blindfolded and to hold my weary boards in place; but such a state of things could not go on forever and, one day, a board that had been relied upon to stand alone gave way, and my liquid contents hastily deluged and inundated the blindfolded circle, while the bather, with his little eyes full of soap and no water at hand with which to wash it out, screamed lustily for his blindfolded mother. That was the last straw and, in consequence, I was relegated to the garret.

Last week, the seven children took me out and tried to use me on the pond as a boat, but I was too heavy-hearted to float and, as there is to be a celebration in the town to-morrow, the children have obtained their parents' permission to add my carcase to a bon-fire which is to be prepared in honor of the event.

Farewell, sweet earth! I am to die to-morrow. Still, death by fire is much more preferable to being smothered slanto-diagonally in a small dog's grave, where even wobbling might be an inconvenient luxury. Farewell!

## A COMPOSITE SCHEME.

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**M**ME. KNOWITALL shrieked. A canary sang merrily in a wicker cage. The twitter of a sparrow was wafted into the room through the open window. Some children in the busy street were singing tunefully. Notwithstanding all this, however, Mme. Knowitall continued to shriek. When not busily engaged in shrieking, she contented herself with merely screeching, howling and yelling. Not satisfied with nature's music, Mme. Knowitall was undertaking to manufacture some for herself and it suited no one but herself. Nature had said that Mme. Knowitall should not sing, on account of which nothing was left for the poor thing to do but to shriek, yell, screech, etc., and the worst of it was that she insisted on doing what she could to the utmost of her ability.



Mme. Knowitall was tall, stout, dark, and last, but by no means least, she was an ear-splitting soprano, who loved grand opera and delighted to let people around the corner know all about the fates, woes, trials and tribulations of Vaselina Awfulfatsky and Benzolino Altogethertoothinovitch, or some such people. The "Bell Song" from "Lakme," "Die Goetterdaemmerung," and "Chained at Last" were murdered with equal ease by the soprano, and she seemed to have no difficulty whatever in damaging the consecutive-ness of a scale, roulade or trill,—no matter of what length, compass or thickness. There was a gem sung by her hourly in description of some unknown hero, who, to judge from the song, was evidently hurrying a fractious mule to an untimely end; in deference to which song, the other Flatites, occupying the same building, had nicknamed the soprano "The Musical Mule," and the voice that stirred up hatred, malice and other uncharitable things in the hearts of the neighbors was not unlike that of a Musical Mule, supposing, for a moment, that a mule, amongst other well-known endowments, could find the necessary space for such a gift.

The voice in question was extremely harsh, not to say discordant; some of the neighbors concluded that it was also freckled, while one irreverent per-

son suggested that perhaps it came to light through a labyrinth of warts. Be that as it may, the summer was now at hand, in consequence of which the Musical Mule had opened her parlor window and was pouring her notes out upon the neighboring populace, which feat caused the populace to pray that the Musical Mule's voice might be either perfected or destroyed—with the majority in favor of its destruction ; but anything in place of the harrowing suspense of its usual state of health, would have been acceptable.

The other Flatites finally rebelled and insisted upon having the Musical Mule's vocal gymnastics extinguished. In vain they asked that she be politely forced to quit either the singing or the premises. The landlord would not listen to them, for the soprano paid her rent promptly and gave him no trouble whatever, which peculiarities were neither customs nor habits of the other Flatites. Not wishing to go where they might be obliged to pay rent frequently, the other Flatites decided to remain as they were and an indignation meeting was held in the flat of the two lame old maids, at which the other Flatites decided that the Musical Mule's voice must be squelched at all hazards,—and, after much thought, plans were formulated, which were to be carried out at once.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was the following afternoon that the canary sang, the sparrow twittered, the children sang tune-fully and the soprano shrieked.

“Tzwee! Tzwee! Tzwee!” sang the canary.

“Chee! Chee! Chee!” twittered the sparrow.

“High C! High C! High C!” shrieked the Musical Mule.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!” went the bell of the Musical Mule’s flat, and a note was handed in, to the effect that the nervous little woman occupying the flat above desired the presence of the soprano at once.

The soprano went up stairs and discovered the nervous little woman entertaining Miss Sick Headache, who had called an hour or two before. The nervous little woman introduced the soprano to Miss Sick Headache who, since her arrival, had been rapidly growing into such a big girl, that the nervous little woman in alarm had sent for the soprano, presumably to stay with her until Miss Sick Headache should decide to take her departure.

As a cold draught was journeying through the room, the soprano began to close the windows; but the nervous little woman objected to being so shut up, and the windows had to be opened again; after which, she begged the soprano to drive Miss Sick Headache out of existence. The soprano was willing to try, and offered to sing, but the nervous little

woman feared that the Musical Mule's song, although capable of driving all else away, would utterly fail to cause Miss Sick Headache to budge; in fact, she was afraid that the song might cause the damsel to grow a foot.

When the soprano left the nervous little woman an hour later, she was accompanied by a chill, occasioned by a prolonged contact with the draught. In her room she found a note from the two lame old maids in the flat below, asking her to go to them immediately. She went. Their windows and doors were opened in such a way that a draught of unusual proportions flew about the Musical Mule's immovable and only available chair. The soprano busied herself by sneezing in different keys, while the two lame old maids inquired as to whether it was true that she intended to move, whether the price of cats had gone up, and whether she would care to marry again providing that she got a chance.

Shortly afterward, the Musical Mule ascended to her room all in a shiver and found an imperative summons to attend a gathering in the top flat. She went up. A children's party was in progress and the parents wished the Musical Mule to sing, in order that the little innocents might be amused. The Musical Mule thought it would be imprudent for her to sing as she had been catching cold all the afternoon. The parents would not take no for an



answer, however, and the Musical Mule, feeling that a condescension on her part might increase the contents of her purse, consented to oblige them.

Before singing she was cajoled into allowing the little innocents to feed her with home-made ice cream, until one of the darlings accidentally (?) dropped a piece of ice down her back, after which she was stationed in an extremely draughty place and requested to sing. She sang, or, rather, gave her well-known imitations of singing. Terrific applause forced her to sing encore after encore. The little innocents were delighted. Never before had they heard such perfect parodies on a saw-filer at work, or a scissor-grinder in motion.

When the soprano had become so hoarse that she could make no more sounds, she pocketed her fee and returned to her apartment in an exceedingly cool frame of mind and body, and there discovered a note from the family in the first flat, peremptorily demanding her presence. As the family in the first flat gave *musicales* at intervals, the Musical Mule hastened down, hoping to secure an engagement. Sure enough! They wished her to try her voice that night, as the lady whom they had engaged would be unable to appear. Everything was in confusion. Windows and doors were wide open, and the place was being swept out in preparation for the performance. While breathing in the

flakes of dust and bathing in a healthy relative of the aforesaid draughts, the Musical Mule made her arrangements as to the terms, etc.; then she went to her room, where she was frequently interrupted and disturbed by several large families of chills.

The Musical Mule neither sang that night nor the next day. She will neither sing next week, nor next month, year or centennial. Kindness and draughts have done what the landlord refused to do for the Musical Mule lost her voice, and forthwith quit both the singing and the premises. The other Flatites are avenged.



# PURGATORY.

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*The Evening Journal, Jersey City, Jan. 19th, 1892.*

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*The Tempest, Jersey City, Feb. 26, 1892.*

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*The Peabody Reporter, Peabody, Mass.*

"Purgatory" is not, as might be thought, a tractate concerning a Papal error, but a very touching story of a little fellow to whom the pseudonym had been given by A. H. Laidlaw, JR."—*The Presbyterian Journal, Phila. Jan 28, 1892.*

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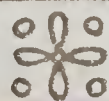
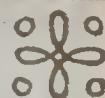


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